

a side wall extending upward from said floor,

a passenger seat adjacent said side wall, and

means for securing a wheelchair to said vehicle,

wherein said passenger seat is foldable from a seating position occupying an area above said floor to a folded position that allows said wheelchair to be positioned in said area, and

said means for securing a wheelchair is [fixed] permanently attached to said vehicle and comprises a plurality of means for engaging said wheelchair, wherein each of said plurality of means for engaging said wheelchair is locked to a respective location in said area with two of said means for engaging being adjacent said side wall, and said means for securing further comprises a movable element [and is] movable between an operative position extending to a further location in [into] said area spaced from said side wall [for receiving said wheel chair] and a second position [remote from] closer to said side wall than said further location [area], and wherein said movable element comprises a further means for engaging said wheelchair and means for locking said movable element in said operative position such that said further means is locked at said further location for cooperating with said plurality of means for engaging to secure said wheelchair to said vehicle.

2. (Amended) A combination according to claim 1 wherein said [means for securing] movable element is pivotally mounted to said vehicle for movement between said operative and second positions.

3. (Amended) A combination according to claim 2 wherein said [means for securing] movable element comprises an elongate bar having a pivotal connection at an end adjacent said side wall [and latch means for holding said securing element in said operative position when said latch is engaged and for allowing said securing element to be moved to said second position when said latch means is disengaged].

6. (Amended) A combination according to claim 1 [further comprising second means for securing a wheel chair to a vehicle, wherein said second means for securing is spaced from said means for securing and comprises means for engaging a said wheelchair, whereby] wherein said means for engaging on said [means for securing are] movable element is adapted to engage one end of [a] said wheelchair and one of said plurality of means for engaging [on said second means for securing are] is adapted to engage an opposite end of said wheelchair.

23 (Amended) Apparatus for securing a wheelchair to a vehicle comprising

a bar,

an adjustable strap secured to said bar and adapted to extend from said bar for engaging said wheelchair and securing said wheelchair to said vehicle, and

means for permanently mounting said bar to [a] said vehicle such that said bar may be moved with respect to said vehicle between an operative position where said strap is locked to said vehicle at a predetermined location with respect to said vehicle [can be attached to] for engaging said wheelchair under tension and a storage position where said strap is remote from said [wheelchair] predetermined location.

25. (Amended) A method for attaching a wheelchair to a vehicle comprising:

providing said vehicle with an area for receiving said wheelchair,

providing said vehicle with means for securing said wheelchair in said area to said vehicle, wherein said means for securing comprises a plurality of adjustable straps for engaging said wheelchair locked [is fixed] to said vehicle at predetermined spaced locations and [comprises] a movable element having [means] a further adjustable strap thereon for engaging a portion of said wheelchair in said area, said movable element being movable with respect to said vehicle between an operating position wherein said [means for engaging] further strap is [located] locked relative to said area to allow said [means for engaging] further strap to be attached to said portion of said wheelchair and a storage position wherein said [means for engaging] further strap is located relative to said area to be remote from said portion of said wheelchair,

placing said wheelchair in said area,

moving said movable element from said storage position to said operating position, and

attaching said means for securing to said wheelchair.

Cancel claims 7 through 22, and add the following new claims

26 (New) A system for securing a wheelchair to a vehicle comprising:

four straps, each of which has means for engaging the frame of said wheelchair,

and

means for locking said straps to said vehicle at predetermined, spaced locations of said vehicle such that each of said straps is adapted to extend from a respective one of said locations to said wheelchair for allowing said means for engaging said frame to engage said wheelchair and secure said wheelchair to said vehicle by tensional forces on said straps,

wherein said means for locking includes a securing element having one of said straps thereon, means for permanently mounting said securing element to said vehicle, and means for moving a portion of said securing element having said one of said straps between an operative position where said securing element locks said one of said straps at one of said locations and a storage position where said one of said straps is displaced from said one of said locations.

27 (New) In combination,

a vehicle having a wheelchair-receiving area,

a first housing and first flexible strap, said first flexible strap having one end adjustably received in said housing and an opposite end adapted to engage, under tension, a portion of a wheelchair in said wheelchair-receiving area, said housing being permanently attached to said vehicle,

a bar permanently attached to said vehicle and capable of being moved between an operative position and a storage position, and

a second housing and second flexible strap, said second flexible strap having one end adjustably received in said second housing and an opposite end adapted to engage, under tension, a portion of a wheelchair in said wheelchair-receiving area,